

LETTER

FROM

A Gentleman in *London* to his Friend in the Countrey, on the Occasion of the late *Trial* of STEPHEN COLLEDGE

S I R,

WHen I had the Happiness to see you last, I remember (upon our Discour-
ling concerning the *Papish Plot*) you seem'd to have a more Charitable Opinion of the *Phanatical Party* than ordinary; for that they appear'd so mighty solicitous for the Security of His Majesties Person, and of the Protestant Religion, by Clamouring for a Strict Prosecution of that *Damnable Conspiracy*. But by this time, and upon this new Face of Affairs, you are Convinced, (no doubt,) that they deserv'd not your good Thoughts; and hold their Devilish Practices in just detestation; for *Colledge's Trial* is a Clear Proof, (I wish it were the onely one they had afforded us) that when they pretend the greatest Loyalty to their Prince, 'tis only for a Cloak to cover some *Execrable Design* they have in hand. They are most certainly, (Sir,) *Wolves in Sheeps Cloathing*, Men that will *Judas-like* betray with a Kiss. But if it happens that their *Perfidious Practices* come once to be detected, and any One Criminal brought to the Bar of Justice; with what Zeal does the whole Faction appear in His Defence? They impeach the Credit of the Kings Evidence; Exposing them by the Names of *Papists, Irish Tories, &c.* and Exert their Malice against all that dare believe what is Attested; or that Pretend to Maintain the King's Authority and the Law against the *Designing Contrivances* of these *Indefatigable Workers of Iniquity*. They will at any rate procure Persons to Oppose and Confront the Kings Evidence, by positively asserting any thing that may tend to invalidate their Testimonies. and rather than appear deficient, will produce Witnesses, only to make a noise in the World, or thereby to insinuate into the Minds of the too-Credulous Vulgar a belief of their Innocence. And these forsooth must all be heard, though perhaps they speak scarce One word to the purpose. This is wonderfully apparent in *Colledge's Trial*, in which, besides the many Remote Circumstances multiplied by *Colledge's Witnesses*, a Plain and Gross Falshood appears by Comparing the 53th. 54th and 59th. Pages with the 56th. Page 53. Dr. Oates affirms that the whole time of Alderman Wilcox's Treat at the Crown-Tavern without Temple-Bar was spent in a Philosophical Discourse betwixt himself and Mr. Savage, and for the Truth of it Appeals to the Testimonies of Mr. Thomas S. and his Brother. The former, viz. Mr. Thomas Smith Concurr

with the Doctor, and says P. 54. that all the Discourse was about some Points in *Philosophy* and *Divinity*, concerning the Existence of GOD, and the Immortality of the Soul; and was confident that nothing of Treason could come from *Colledge*, for that he fell asleep. All which, and much more was oppos'd to Mr. John Smith's Testimony; and from thence *Colledge* infers [Thus you see, My Lord, Smith's Testimony is false.] And that he might make the thing more Conspicuous, he calls in Mr. Samuel Oates, who P. 56. out of his Extraordinary Zeal to the Cause peremptorily undertakes to illustrate the Point, and gives a Relation of all the Discourse above mention'd, which he says (and is very confident in it) was about Matters of Common Discourse, Matters of Eating and Drinking, &c. and that there was not a word mention'd of the Existence of God, or the Immortality of the Soul: which plainly Contradicts, and gives the lie to both Dr. O. and the said S. From whence it is Evident, how much these men prefer the Interest of their Party before Loyalty, Truth or Justice. And yet these are the men that Applaud themselves so much upon their Religion And to set the fairer Gloss upon their Pernicious Enterprizes, they shelter their Horrid Conspiracies under the Notion of Godliness and True Protestantisme.

It now is, (as it formerly was,) their Work and Endeavour to Lessen the Kings Authority, which is the only way to make it void; and they AG and Labour the First, out of a Design to make it subservient to the Latter. It is not Policy (you know) for People to Declare their Designs at first; for without a plausible pretence for the carrying them on, thereby to Blind the Eyes of the Adverse Party, it's improbable they should prove any otherwise than ineffectual. 'Tis a proverbial saying *Ingenium vires superas*. And a War cannot be maintained, if it be not as well upheld by Stratagems as by Force. In our late Troubles the pretence was to Rescue the King out of the hands of Wicked Council. But having once done that (as they suppos'd) they not only afforded him no better, but took away his Authority, clap't him up in Prison, and there kept him secure, till they convey'd him to the Scaffold. And which was an augmentation to their Wickedness, they did not do this only to make themselves Supreme, but looking upon themselves as the Highest Authority, they thought

thought they might thereby lawfully do this, and far more; fancying the King to be more subject to their Wills; than ever their Allegiance bound them to His Sovereignty. Nay and to so great a height is the impudence and insolence of some Hot-Headed Phanatics now grown, that they are so far from detesting and repenting of that Barbarous

Col. Tryal. Villany, that they still justify it; impudently reflecting on that Sacred Martyr. And others of them that are more wary, endeavour to shift off that abominable impiety by Arguments strong enough (perhaps) to work upon the simplicity and credulity of a sort of ignorant People; who yet are not now (surely) any longer to be blinded with such specious pretences; since it does so evidently appear that they want not a Will to act a second part of that dismal Tragedy. They rail with open mouth against the Papists (tis true) and with a pretended shew of Loyalty and Zeal for the preservation of His Majesties Person, do seemingly detest and abhor their deposing and King-killing doctrine; But then at the same time (you see) they are secretly undermining the Established Government, endeavouring and designing the utter extirpation of Monarchy, and consequently the destruction of the Royal Family. They stick not to accuse the Kings best and most eminent Friends (nay the King

pag. 31. himself) of a Design to introduce Popery, and Arbitrary Power; And at the same time are doing their best to divest His Majesty of His Regal Power so to introduce a Republick. These are the men that take such care for the Preservation of His Majesties Person & the Protestant Religion against the Designs of the Papists: And (truly) they had pitch'd upon a ready way to effect it. For First (as has been depos'd upon oath) they intended to seize His Sacred Person: And And then (if He would not comply with their unjust Desires, (or the Priests that herd amongst them did not do this business) to serve him as they did His Royal Father. So that tho' His Majesty had through the unparalleled care of this Godly Party escap'd the snares of Popery, yet he had been obnoxious to the same Deposing and King-killing Principles only in terms convertible from DEPOSING and KILLING to a BRINGING TO JUSTICE. Neither are the unreasonable desires of these insatiable Miscreants ever to be satisfied, They must have the Duke of York totally excluded, or else their Religion, Liberties, Properties, Lives and Fortunes are unsafe, and in danger of being sacrific'd to the Popes Supremacy. So they give out. Whereas it is now clear that they labour'd to remove that obstacle, only to the intent that they might be the better able to take a fairer aim at the Kings own Person. And indeed it is the Present yoke of Monarchy that lies so heavy upon their Backs: not the fear of Popery to come.

pag. 29. Ibid. p. 29. 30. Ibid. p. 30. Thus you see (Sir) that what His Majesty lately Declar'd touching the Exclusion of His Royal Brother was upon great Foresight and Judgment [We can not (says His Majesty, Kings Decl. p. 7.) after the sad experience we have had of the late Civil Wars, that murder'd our Father of blessed memory and ruin'd the Monarchy, consent to a Law that shall establish another most unnatural War, or at least make it necessary to maintain a standing Force for the Preserving the Government and the Peace of the Kingdom. And we have Reason to be-

lieve that if we could have been brought to give our consent to a Bill of Exclusion, the intent was not to rest there, but to pass further, and to attempt some other great and important Changes even in present.] For could such

pag. 30. Wretches as these have had their wills, they meant not only to exclude His R. H. but to extirpate the whole Family of the Stuarts.

The Fears and Jealousies they so much pretend, are first created chiefly by the great Doings of the Party, and then most impiously insus'd into the minds of the Vulgar and Ignorant, who believe what the Leaders of the Faction deliver to them with as steadfast a faith, as the Heathens of old did their Oracles; and are as verily perswaded that their own Principles are Divine, as are the Papists that the Pope is infallible. Upon the least Exercise of His Majesties Prerogative, there are amongst them that possess the People with Fears and Jealousies of their Liberties and Properties being invaded, and of the Rights of the Subject encroach'd upon; while their design is of a far larger extent; for their devouring appetites will never be satiated till the Kings Royal Prerogative shall be totally swallowed up by the Liberty of the Subject; and then indeed His Majesty is in a fair way (according to the Phanatical Loyalty) of being made a Glorious Prince like His Father.

Now let any sober, serious and unbiassed man consider whether these are suitable Returns to so merciful a Prince, who (out of His Royal Clemency to merciless and bloody Traytors) has pass'd an Act of Oblivion upon their execrable impieties in the late Rebellion, freely giving them their Lives and Fortunes, which by the Law of GOD and Man were forfeited to His Justice. What a notorious piece of Ingratitude is it for men to Conspire to take away that Life, which freely gave them their own? To abuse a Mercy so great and transcendent, that tho' they should have endeavour'd to gain a good reputation by a sincere and steadfast Loyalty to their Prince, yet would it have been impossible for them to have made him a sufficient Requital? But indeed it is no more than verifying the old Proverb, *Save a Thief from the Gallows, and he'll cut your Throat*. But methinks it seems wonderfully strange that the ignorance of the Multitude (after the sad experience they have had of that Dire Rebellion) should be so much wrought upon, as not to have so great a horror as they ought, for involving themselves afresh in the same unhappy Troubles; especially considering, that when the Rebels had brought the late Kings Head to the Block, the Liberty and Property of the Subject was utterly lost; the pretended invasion of which was the chief ground of that Fatal War. But such is the obstinacy of some, that the most learned of Pens cannot bring them to a better understanding (at least to a better observance) of their Duty and Allegiance to their Prince; And therefore I shall not in the least pretend to it: only I ventur'd to mind you (especially now you cannot but be well dispos'd to hear it) how vigilant that Party is upon all opportunities and occasions to propagate their Commonwealth Principles.

Thus having given you my thoughts of these Pretended Royalists, I remain

Sir,

Yours, &c.

R. P.